THE SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS FOR FOOD.

BY

JOHN GALSWORTHY,

Author of "Strife," "Justice," "The Man of Property," etc.

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HUMANER METHODS IN THE ABATTOIR.

THE admirable and restrained articles by Mr. John Galsworthy deal with a subject from which men, by predilection, avert their thoughts. Yet there can be no doubt that Mr. Galsworthy makes out an unanswerable case for stricter regulation and humaner methods of animal slaughter. There is no ground for suggesting intentional cruelty on the part of the men concerned in a disagreeable task. The question is whether the methods which they employ, and which the law sanctions, are the most merciful and the best. Nor is there any practical difficulty in the way of a humaner system. In Sweden all the higher animals must be rendered insensible before they are killed in the abattoir. The Swedish law would meet Mr. Galsworthy's criticisms, and could readily be enforced. The issue is not a trifling one. "He prayeth best who loveth best All things both great and small," wrote Coleridge in one of his moments of inspiration. The public should not rest till the dumb animals which perish in man's service and for man's food are slain with a minimum of pain.

From a leading Article, "The Daily Mail," December 17th, 1912.

THE SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS FOR FOOD.

By JOHN GALSWORTHY.

THE thing is horrible, but it isnecessary. Why drag it out into the light ? Why make our thoughts miserable with contemplation of horrors which must exist ?

If it were true that the present methods of slaughtering animals for food in this country were necessary, if all the suffering they involve was inevitable, I should be the first to say : Let us shut our eyes ! For unnecessary suffering—even to ourselves—is anathema. It is just because this particular suffering is avoidable, and easily avoidable, that I feel we must face the matter if we want to call ourselves a decent people.

I am a meat-eater—we are nearly all meat-eaters. Well ! We cannot sit down at present to a single meal without complicity in methods that produce a vast amount of preventible suffering to creatures for whom the least sensitive among us has at heart a certain friendly feeling. For, to those who say that they do not care for animals, that animals, even domestic ones, have no rights except such as for our own advantage we accord them, let me at once reply : I do not agree, but for the sake of argument, granted ; and then conceive, if you can, a world without cattle, sheep, and pigs, and tell me honestly whether you do not miss something friendly. No ! the fact is, we, who are the descendants of countless generations to whom these animals have been literally the breath of life, cannot—even now that we have become such highly civilised townsmen—disclaim sensibility in their regard.

Consider the magnitude of this matter. The calculations of an expert give the following approximate numbers of animals annually killed for food in

England and Wales: 1,850,000 beasts, 8,500,000 sheep, and 3,200,000 pigs. These figures are hard to come at, and may be a million or so out, one way or the other, but even if they be, is there any feature of the national life which can touch this for possibilities of preventible physical suffering? And is there any department so utterly neglected by public opinion and the law?

Save the eating of bread, have we any practice in our lives so consistent as that of eating meat, or any from which we consider that we derive more benefit, or any about whose conditions, sanitary or humane, we are so careless?

If a donkey is badly beaten, a dog stoned, or a cat killed with a riding-whip, the chances are that a prosecution will ensue or a question be asked in Parliament; for public opinion and the law lay it down that the infliction of unnecessary suffering on animals is cruelty, an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment. But if in the dark and sacred precincts of our slaughterhouses some 8,000,000 sheep are killed yearly, *without first being stunned*, by a method which, even in the hands of an expert, produces some seconds of acute suffering (Report of the Admiralty Committee on Humane Slaughtering of Animals, 1904); if thousands of cattle, stunned by inexperienced young slaughtermen, require two or more blows of that primitive instrument, the pole-axe; if pigs are driven in gangs into a small space and there killed, one by one, while the others squeal in terror round their dead bodies; if all this preventible suffering is inflicted daily in our slaughterhouses, what does public opinion know of it, and what does the law care?

One of the quaintest things in life is the inability of the human mind to see that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. There was a time in this country when men beat their donkeys

set cocks fighting, baited bears and badgers, tied tin pots to dogs' tails, with the lightest of light hearts and no consciousness at all that they were outside the pale of decency in doing so. Their descendants, butchers, slaughterers, what-not (as good and decent fellows as members of other trades) now look on the unnecessary suffering involved in such doings with the same aversion as the rest of us; but they still kill their sheep without stunning, still drive their pigs in gangs into the slaughtering chamber, still prefer to use the uncertain pole-axe—all without a qualm.

Why should this enormous field, wherein does occur such an amount of easily preventible suffering, be left so utterly unpatrolled by the law, which has interested itself in warding off all needless suffering from cats and dogs and horses? Well! The law stands idle partly because the animals we kill for food are not so near and dear to us as those others. We should never stand the horses and dogs and cats we make such pets of killed when their time comes in the manner in which we kill our sheep and pigs. And partly the law stands idle because in the case of horses and dogs and cats there is no large leagued interest, such as that of the meat trades, setting its face against interference.

I am told that the meat trades constitutes the strongest body in the kingdom. And well they may, considering the vast proportions of their business. But presumably the meat trades are controlled by men very like ourselves; no more cruel, no more desirous of inflicting unnecessary suffering and if I am told that these men are going to oppose, just for the sake of prejudice, such simple, elementary safeguards against unnecessary suffering as I shall outline, I can only say I do not believe it. There will be nothing prejudicial to their interest in these suggestions. Nothing startling, extravagant, or experimental. The case has been proved up to the hilt. What on earth is the good of appointing a Governmental Committee of first-rate men* to examine into

* The Admiralty Committee on Humane Slaughtering, 1904, Chairman Mr. Arthur Lee, M.P.

facts if their Report is to be paid about as much attention to as one would pay to the suggestions of seven lunatics? It is ridiculous to pretend that humane methods are not effective, in the face of universal evidence from abroad; in the face of numerous testimonials from butchers in this country; in the face of the fact that Mr. Christopher Cash in the year 1910 had 4,000 animals (the property of thirty butchers) killed by humane methods, and though he was in every case willing to pay full compensation for any injury to a carcase had not one single claim made on him. (From a pamphlet entitled "The Humane Slaughtering of Animals for Food," by Christopher Cash. Issued by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.)

Butchers and slaughtermen perform a necessary task from which most of us would shrink, and it is both unbecoming and nonsensical to suggest intentional cruelty on their part. I do not for a moment. But I do say that it is the business of the law so to control the methods of slaughter as to obviate, as far as possible, needless suffering, however unintentionally it may be inflicted.

In the following brief summary of our want of system, I am not dealing at all with the Jewish method of killing, for not being a Jew and having merely seen the method at work, I cannot pretend to be qualified to discuss a custom which, it is true, nearly turned me sick, but which appears to be necessary to the peace of the Jewish mind. This would seem to be a matter for the non-"religious" conscience of a people in many respects more humane than ourselves. Neither am I speaking as to Scotland, which is, of course, far ahead of us, having provided by the Burgh Police Act of 1892 that where there are public there shall be no private slaughter-houses; and where—at all events in Edinburgh—they have abattoirs that compare, I am told, with the best on the Continent.

The following is a rough outline of what at present seems good to a nation which prides itself on being at once the most practical and the most humane in the whole world :—

A mixed system of private and public slaughter-houses — thousands of private slaughter-houses (some of them highly insanitary) alongside of a few municipally controlled abattoirs.

No regulation that where there are public abattoirs there shall be no private ones ; *hence* great difficulty in making these public slaughter-houses pay their way.

Inspection of private slaughter-houses, in spite of all the good intentions of local authorities and medical officers, admitted to be very inefficient in so far as condition of meat and method of slaughter are concerned.

Supervision of public slaughter-houses much hampered by the present widespread custom of allowing butchers to send in their beasts with their own slaughtermen.

No general statutory regulations as to method of slaughter. Model by-laws have been drawn up by the Local Government Board and recommended to local authorities—but they are not compulsory and have been but sparsely adopted.

Slaughtermen not licensed ; nor—except in slaughter-houses directly controlled by a Government Department (such as the Admiralty)—required by law to be proficient before they commence slaughtering. They learn in the great majority of cases on the live animal.

METHODS OF SLAUGHTER.

CATTLE are almost universally stunned before their throats are cut. So far—good ! But they are still, for the most part, stunned with the pole-axe. This weapon produces complete unconsciousness at the first blow, *if well wielded. If not well wielded*——! I have been assured that the cases of misfire amount to a very small percentage. But on the first two beasts slaughtered before my eyes the first blow of the pole-axe—wielded in each case by an experienced slaughterer—descended without effect. The animals moaned, and waited perhaps a minute for the second and successful blow. Thanks to the efforts of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Council of Justice to Animals, the Humanitarian League, of Mr. Christopher Cash, and others, there are now a considerable number of improved instruments for stunning cattle in use—the Greener and Behr pistols ; the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals humane killer, and large captive-bolt pistol ; the apparently perfect Ransom pneumatic killer (recently tested at Islington Cattle Market and awarded the Council of Justice to Animals £100 prize), and others. But the number of these improved instruments in use at present is only a fringe to the mass of the time-hallowed and uncertain pole-axes.

CALVES : "The usual practice in this country appears to be to run the animal up first (by a tackle fastened to its hind legs) and then to stun it, previous to bleeding." (Report of the Admiralty Committee.) On this method the Committee thus commented : "This order of procedure is not so humane, and appears to be unnecessary." . . . "Calves should first be stunned by a blow on the head with a club"—*i.e.*, before being run up. *It must be remembered that when this Committee conducted its investigation, in* 1904, *the best instruments for stunning had not been invented.*

SHEEP, with few exceptions, are not stunned before they are bled The method of killing them, and

the amount of suffering they undergo, are thus summed up in the report of the Admiralty Committee : " The usual method in this country is to lay the sheep on a wooden 'crutch' and then to thrust a knife through the neck below the ears, and with a second motion to insert the point from within, between the joints of the vertebræ, thus severing the spinal cord. In the hands of an expert this method is fairly rapid but somewhat uncertain, the time which *elapses between the first thrust of the knife and complete loss of sensibility varying, according to Professor Starling's observations, from 5 to 30 seconds. In the hands of an inexpert operator it may be some time before death supervenes, and there can be little doubt that this method must be very painful to the sheep as long as consciousness remains.*

"At the best it is a somewhat difficult operation, and yet in practice is often entrusted to the younger and less experienced hands in the slaughter-house, the probable reason being that sheep are easy to handle, and do not struggle or give trouble when stuck. . ." In other words, the more helpless the creature the less need for humanity ! "In Denmark and many parts of Germany and Switzerland the law requires that sheep shall always be stunned previous to being stuck, and the Committee have satisfied themselves, by practical experiments and observation, that this can be done expeditiously and without difficulty. A small club with a heavy head should be used, and the sheep should be struck on the top of the head between the ears. This point is important, as it is almost impossible to stun a sheep by striking it on the forehead. . . It was also clearly demonstrated that the stunning caused no injury to the sheep's head or to the 'scrag of mutton' which could in any way depreciate their market value."

Notwithstanding this recommendation, the Local Government Board have omitted from their model by-laws (which, as before said, are not obligatory) a regulation requiring the stunning of sheep. For this omission they give the following ground : "In relation to this question the Board have been advised by the

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries that they would see no objection to a by-law requiring the stunning of pigs or calves, but that the stunning of sheep is a difficult operation, in the carrying out of which cruelty might easily occur." Acting on this advice the Local Government Board says: "While the practice of stunning sheep may be a proper one to adopt in public abattoirs, where it will be carried out by skilled slaughtermen, the Board doubt whether it is advisable to require its adoption in private establishments unless there is reasonable ground for believing that it will be properly performed."

Now in regard to this: First, why should there be *universal* suffering to save cases of possible suffering? Secondly, the use of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' captive-bolt or spring-bolt pistol or the Ransom pneumatic killer entirely removes difficulty, if indeed there be any even in stunning sheep with a mallet, *if only the sheep is struck on the top of the head between the ears.* This myth of difficulty is in direct opposition to the assurance of the Admiralty Committee and to the evidence of foreign countries. The objection of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries would appear to be based on the assumption that sheep *must* be struck in the wrong place.

PIGS: "The Committee ascertained that it is the usual practice in *large establishments* in England to stun pigs by a blow on the forehead previous to sticking them, and there is no difficulty in carrying this out, as the pig's head is soft as compared with that of the sheep. The Committee are of opinion that the preliminary stunning should be enforced in all cases, the evidence tending to show that this operation is often limited to pigs which are so large or strong as to give trouble, or to cases where, owing to the location of the slaughter-house, the squeals of the stuck pigs cause annoyance to the neighbourhood. *The Committee feel that considerations of humanity are at least as important as those above mentioned.*" A sentiment with which those of us who are not cads will presumably agree.

Note, however, that the Admiralty Committee refer above only to *large* establishments. It is notorious that numbers of pigs are still killed all over the country in ways that the following quotation describes : "I, with another witness, saw five pigs killed last Thursday afternoon—three small ones and two large ones. The pigs were 'knifed' one at a time and allowed to wander round the slaughter-house bleeding and in a drunken, reeling, rolling state, and at the same time uttering most plaintive cries." (From a letter to a daily journal.) The late eminent physiologist Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, in a paper read before the Medical Society of London some years ago, says : "Pigs, I have said, *suffer a mental terror of death*, and to them commonly is also given a severe degree of physical pain. . . . When they are killed by the knife alone they die by a hæmorrhage that may extend with persistent consciousness over three or four minutes of time."

In relation to the pig's mental horror of death, I myself, the other day, saw the following sight :— Fifteen or so pigs in a slaughtering chamber just large enough to hold them and the slaughterer. Of these pigs three or four had already been stunned and knifed and lay dead and bleeding among their living brethren, who with manifest terror were squealing and straining here and there against the walls, while the slaughterer moved about among them selecting the next victim. A blow, a cut, and there was another dead pig ; and this would go on, no doubt, till the whole fifteen were despatched and their bodies shot down the slide. Terror of death ! Yes ! At all this, by the way, a boy of about thirteen was looking on— and this in a public slaughter-house with a good superintendent and under municipal control.

SEGREGATION OF ANIMALS *about to be slaughtered, from slaughtering operations :* "It appears to be the common practice, even in modern and well-regulated slaughter-houses, to keep the animals, which are immediately awaiting slaughter, in pens which are mere annexes to the slaughter chamber itself, and in

many cases in full view of all that goes on inside. . . There is no point which the Committee have more carefully investigated than the question as to whether animals do or do not suffer fear from this contact, and the evidence of those best qualified to judge is so conflicting that no absolute verdict can be given. . . The animal should be given the full benefit of the doubt." (Report of the Admiralty Committee.)

But the animal is not given the benefit of the doubt. Whatever the degree of consciousness of animals awaiting slaughter (sometimes for a whole hour) just divided by a door which, all regulations to the contrary, is far from always shut, whether they know or not that it is death which awaits them, any spectator accustomed to animals in their normal state has only to look at their eyes, as they stand waiting, to feel sure that they are in fear and trouble.

Such then, in brief and in rough, are the conditions and methods of slaughter which still seem good to us. When the Admiralty Committee issued their report eight years ago they made the following recommendations :—

(*a*) All animals (cattle, calves, sheep, lambs, and pigs) without exception must be stunned or otherwise rendered unconscious before blood is drawn.

(*b*) Animals awaiting slaughter must be so placed that they cannot see into the slaughter house, and the doors of the latter must be kept closed while slaughtering is going on.

(*c*) The drainage of the slaughter-house must be so arranged that no blood or other refuse can flow out within the sight or *smell** of animals awaiting slaughter, and no such refuse shall be deposited in proximity to the waiting pens.

(*d*) If more animals than one are being slaughtered in one slaughter-house at one time they must not be in view of each other.

(*e*) None but licensed men shall be employed in or about slaughter-houses.

* I believe it is the smell of blood, rather than the sight which affects animals.

What has been done to carry out these recommendations, the fruit of most thorough and laborious investigations carried out at a considerable expenditure of public money, and presumably with some object, by men well qualified for their task ?

Just this much has been done. The recommendations have been adopted and are worked successfully by the Admiralty themselves, and they form the basis of certain clauses in a set of model by-laws so amiably unobligatory that hardly anyone pays any attention to them.

Seeing that the condition of affairs is such as I have detailed ; seeing that the Admiralty Committee made the following wise remarks :—" However humane and scientific in theory may be the methods of slaughter, it is inevitable that abuses and cruelty may result in practice, unless there is a proper system of official inspection " ; and : " In the interests not only of humanity, but of sanitation, order, and ultimate economy, it is highly desirable that, where circumstances permit, private slaughter-houses should be replaced by public abattoirs, and that no killing should be permitted except in the latter under official supervision " ; seeing the enormous dimensions of this matter, and that our methods are behind those of nearly every Continental country and vastly behind those of Denmark, Switzerland and Germany, it would occur to the simple mind that here was eminently a case for broad and sweeping action on the part of the Legislature.

I have not even thought it worth while to dwell on the *insanitary* aspect of the present system, because the Royal Commission on Food from Tuberculous Animals (again at a considerable expenditure of public money) reported thus : " The actual amount of Tuberculous disease among certain classes of food animals is so large as to afford to man frequent occasions for contracting tuberculous disease through his food. We think it probable that an appreciable part of the tuberculosis that affects man is obtained through his food ;" practically without effect ! If the public likes to spend

its money on ascertaining a risk to itself and likes to disregard that risk to itself when ascertained, far be it from me to gainsay the public. But if anyone be interested in the sanitary side of our want of system, let him go to the superintendent of some large public slaughter-house and ask what percentage of meat is condemned daily ; then let him ask some medical officer of health how far it is possible to inspect the condition of carcases in *private* slaughter-houses—and then let him go home and think ! There I leave the matter. For, frankly, it is not this, but the disregard by the public of needless suffering inflicted on helpless creatures, bred and killed for its own advantage, that moves me, and I venture to think will move anyone who is not so delicate and tender-hearted (?) that he would rather not know—thank you—what went before his beef and mutton and crisp breakfast bacon.

Before we can hold up our heads in relation to this question which so directly affects nearly all of us there must be an irreducible minimum of reform, a very A B C of decency :

No animal to be bled before being stunned (or otherwise rendered instantaneously insensible).

No animal to be slaughtered in sight of another animal.

No slaughter-refuse and blood to be allowed within sight or smell of an animal awaiting slaughter.

No stunning or slaughtering implement to be used that has not been approved by the Local Government Board.

The licence of no slaughter-house to be renewed unless it possesses these approved stunning and slaughtering implements, a copy of official instructions how to use them, and can prove that it does use them and them alone.

All offenders against these regulations to be liable to penalties on summary conviction.

Why has not this simple harmless minimum of decency and humanity been—as in other countries—long ago adopted? For the usual reasons : Custom ; prejudice ; dislike of a little—a very little—extra trouble

and a little—a very little extra expense; liberty of the subject. To take the last point first. Dictate to a man how he shall slaughter his own animals—what next! Well! I am all for liberty of the subject. I am for letting him hurt *himself* as much as ever he likes. I even go so far as to say that prosecutions for attempted suicide are wrong and ridiculous; but where the subject claims to hurt the helpless with impunity, then it is time to hurt the subject.

I fancy that in most men's minds there lurks the feeling: "Oh! a little extra suffering to animals who are going to die anyway in a minute or two—what does it matter? Now, if you were to put it on the ground that it hurts the slaughterer there'd be something in it!" Yes! It certainly may hurt the *morale* of the slaughterer—but not much, for he inflicts the needless suffering *without consciousness of cruelty;* and ill actions of which one is not conscious only negatively deteriorate *morale*, in so far as they are a waste of time in which good actions might have been performed. But to say that it does not matter whether we needlessly hurt the sheep or pig because they are going to die anyway is really to say that no suffering matters, however unnecessary since we must all die and it will be all the same a hundred years hence. It is at all events not a saying that I can imagine coming out of the mouth of a gentleman in perfect possession of all his faculties, with a knife going in just behind his right ear and wiggling about in his neck and head till it finds his spinal cord between the joints of his vertebræ. I have always understood that the main characteristic of a gentleman is that he shrinks from *needlessly* inflicting on any other sentient creature—even the most humble—treatment that he would not himself relish. And at all events, if you think that the infliction of some seconds of excruciating torture on a humble animal does not really matter *to the animal* because she cannot tell you that it does—it conceivably might hurt *you* a little to feel it was needlessly inflicted.

In regard to custom and prejudice, and "what my father did is good enough for me!" I myself heard two fine expositions of this defence from two obviously humane butchers:

I: "So you never stun your sheep before bleeding them?"

First Butcher: "Oh! no."

"Why not?"

"It isn't necessary."

"Not to avoid pain?"

"Oh! no; there's no pain."

Ten minutes later:

I: "You always stun your cattle before bleeding them?"

First Butcher: "Oh! yes always."

"Why?"

"Oh! it avoids a lot of pain."

To the second butcher:

I: "Then you never stun your sheep before bleeding them."

Second Butcher: "No, never."

"Why not? Is there any objection?"

"No, I dont see any objection; only it's never done. I've never seen a sheep stunned."

"Just custom?"

"Yes just that."

The old, ignorant prejudice that animals do not bleed freely if stunned first is now, I think, never advanced.

So much for prejudice and custom.

But now we come to the real gravamen of the resistance—a little extra trouble, a suspicion of extra expense. This touches all the points in the irreducible minimum of reform that this country must undertake in order to comply with common decency. For instance, the Ransom pneumatic killer (*which can be used for all animals*) and the various Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' humane killers actually cost about thirty-five shillings. You must absolutely spend perhaps an hour in learning how to use them

and five minutes or so per day in cleaning them. They are still new things, "fads"—although they have passed all tests and been proved by dozens of testimonials from butchers in this country to be perfectly efficient.

Again, it is convenient not to have to be careful to shut doors between slaughtering chambers and animals awaiting slaughter, or to have to pave your floors so that blood does not run out into the waiting pens. It is handy (especially in ill-constructed slaughter-houses) to kill animals in sight of each other. It is a bore not to be able to engage a raw lad, or any casual person that comes along, and start him in straight away to slaughter your animals. It is a nuisance to make the slightest change of any sort that involves any readjustment whatsoever —after all it only regards dumb animals, about which no common-sensical person is going to worry his head too much. No, indeed, they have no force behind them, are not represented on the public bodies of the country; they cannot lobby in the House of Commons, cannot withdraw votes or commit outrages; cannot even instruct counsel; they have no rights save those which mere chivalry shall give them? Besides—says Defence—everything is already done as well as ever it can be done. As for Germany, Switzerland, Denmark—who knows whether they are really better? There is never any way of doing things that beats the ways of our own country—the good old-fashioned methods—if there were any real need for reform we should be the first to undertake it!

I have reckoned that in the case of sheep alone the amount of needless suffering inflicted must amount to some 33,000 hours of solid, uninterrupted death agony each year—(number of sheep slaughtered without stunning, 8,000,000; period of suffering, 5 to 30 seconds—Admiralty Committee's report)—all preventible by a few strokes of the legislative pen. Pleasant reflection for those of us who eat mutton! Have we really grown callous? or sensitive in so peculiar a way that we would rather inflict all this needless suffering than stain our precious feelings by thinking of it long enough to take the short necessary measures to remove

it ? I know not ! But I can well imagine the answer that will be made : Neither ! It is merely that we do not feel that any rules we pass will be obeyed. The butchers themselves must first be convinced. Is this plea true ?

Just this far true : That, as in every other case of new law, there would be required a little special activity at first. But it is only a question of starting a new custom. In two years' time, if these simple, harmless regulations concerning the slaughter of animals for food be enforced—not merely recommended, as now—there will hardly be an animal in this country bled without first being stunned by humane methods, or any beasts watching their fellows being killed, and we shall be free from this stigma on our name and from the haunting of our consciences when we sit down to meat.

I attack no one in this matter ; I blame no one. I am not in a position to—for the charge of callousness falls heavily on my own shoulders, who have eaten meat all these years without ever troubling as to what went before it. Nor can I hope that these words will do more than ruffle the nerves of the public ; but I do trust that such of our legislators as may chance to read them may be moved for just a few hours out of their busy lives, to feel that it is their part, as gentle men, to save these patient dumb creatures, who cannot plead in their own behalf, from all the suffering that the satisfaction of our wants *does not compel* us to inflict on them.

If what I have written has seemed extravagant, he who reads has only to go and see for himself.

POSTSCRIPT.—I would draw the reader's attention to the fact that from first to last these articles are founded on the Report of the Admiralty Committee, 1904. They constitute but a convenient summary of the unanimous verdict of able and disinterested men, who, officially appointed to examine the whole matter, held many sittings, heard many witnesses, saw with their own eyes, and made their own experimental investigations. All I have done, therefore, is to give publicity to the deliberate conclusions of an impartial tribunal, which had an unique opportunity of forming a comprehensive and dispassionate judgment.

A CLAIM ON HUMANITY.

WE publish to-day the last of Mr. Galsworthy's arresting articles on the need for reform in the British methods of slaughtering animals for food. The case which has been set forth in them with such moderation and reticence is so strong that the public will not rest until the reforms which Mr. Galsworthy has indicated as necessary have been carried out. There are three main points in which we are behind the most progressive Continental nations. In the first place, the stunning of all animals before they are killed is not enforced by law in this country, and the instruments of slaughter are not the best that can be devised. In the second place, the use of public slaughter-houses is not compulsory, where such slaughter-houses exist. In the third place there is insufficient inspection of slaughter-house methods and of the animals killed for food. "Great Britain," state the greatest authorities on this subject, Professors Leighton and Douglas, "is lamentably behind other European countries as well as America in the methods adopted for the proper inspection of meat."

So long as millions of sheep, calves, and pigs are killed annually without being stunned, as a nation we are tolerating a crime against humanity. Other countries have prohibited such cruelty while the British Government and the British Parliament have never moved. There is no practical difficulty whatever in the way of more merciful methods. As this is no party matter, and as the mere statement of the facts should arouse public opinion to demand action, we trust that the Local Government Board will bring in the required legislation without delay. Our laws against cruelty to animals are little more than a farce while this scandal of the slaughter-houses remains.

From a leading article, "The Daily Mail,"
December 19th, 1912.

THE MEAT TRADE AND MR. GALSWORTHY.

A REJOINDER.

To the Editor of "The Daily Mail," January 10th, 1913.

Sir,—The executive of the National Federation of Meat Traders' Associations, realising the importance of the articles and letters published in *The Daily Mail* on the "Slaughter of Animals for Food," take the earliest opportunity of answering the unfair allegations brought against the meat trader.

We would respectfully inform your readers that these articles and letters are without exception penned by persons who have no practical knowledge of the subject, and this accounts for many inaccuracies and exaggerated statements.

The author, while referring to the butcher as a "decent fellow," and saying "I attack no one; I blame no one," at the same time denounces him as a needlessly cruel man, who, having had suggested for his use implements for the slaughter of cattle alleged to be an improvement upon those at present generally in use, either through prejudice or obstinacy refuses to take advantage of them.

The very fact that the implements referred to are many and various demonstrates a want of uniformity of opinion among those who advocate their use. We have had brought to our notice by the makers, or by associations, the "Behr pistol," the "Greener gun," the "captive bolt pistol," the "spring gun," the "Breuneau mask," the "Ransom compressed air-gun," and others. We agree with the statement of Professor R. Wallace, of Edinburgh, as follows—namely:

> While the people who hold patents for killing machines would greatly benefit, I doubt if the aggregate suffering of the animals would be any less if Mr. Galsworthy's proposals were adopted.

We trust the public will not accept as truth the assertions of Mr. Galsworthy in one of his articles—viz. :

> It is a bore not to be able to engage a raw lad or any casual person that comes along and start him in straightaway to slaughter your animals.

As experienced and practical men, we say that such a condition of things does not exist—It is an absolute impossibility. But, they ask, How do they get their experience ? Reading the articles and letters, the suggestion is that the stunning of an animal is a difficult and somewhat complicated operation, requiring such skill as would be needed when a surgeon is cutting past a blood-vessel ; but the real truth is that the vulnerable portion of a bullock's skull is of such proportions that perhaps the wonder is that one could make a mistake. Slaughtermen have years of practice before they become first hands or foremen, and have to become efficient in using both chopper and axe on the *carcase* before being allowed to touch the live animals.

As a trade, we are willing and anxious to adopt any implement that can be demonstrated to be perfect, but up to the present this cannot be claimed for any one of the suggested implements, as the " expert " demonstrating on behalf of the advocates of one or other of the guns has been known to require *two*, and in one instance *three, shots* before the animal was unconscious.

In private practice, moreover, we have evidence that with these so-called " improved " implements mistakes are made ; cartridges miss fire or the explosive material is not sufficiently powerful to drive the bolt home. The " Ransom compressed air-gun " has been tried by some members of our trade and is very favourably reported upon, but its operations have been too limited to enable us to express a decided opinion at the moment.

We quite concur with the published opinion of the Board of Agriculture that the stunning of sheep would rather increase than alleviate their suffering.

We can assure our patrons that butchers are fully alive to the importance of using the best and most efficient slaughtering implements, which self-interest, if no higher motive, prompts them to do ; but apart from this, local authorities have the power to enforce existing regulations, and we can testify they are not slow to exercise their authority.

If it is considered necessary to pursue investigations as to cruelty, would it not be well for the writers to direct their attention to the palpable evidence afforded by the big shoots ? On the morning after, how many birds, etc., are found, which have passed the night under conditions extremely unpleasant to dwell upon ? Again, is there no terror or cruelty when the dogs ruthlessly tear the fox to ribbons ?—but this is "sport." Then there is the lady with the luxurious furs, who would hardly like to enquire as to the means employed to obtain them from the living animal—but this is "fashion." Has the veterinary surgeon, moreover, who is so shocked at the method employed to slaughter animals, no knowledge of the terrible pain inflicted when a horse is "fired"?

Examples of real cruelty during life might be greatly multiplied, but our only object is to clear an honourable and indispensable industry from the serious allegations made against it.

In conclusion, the executive of this federation, which represents the meat industry of Great Britain, has been, and is, prepared to arrange for further demonstrations of cattle-killing implements, and will undertake to recommend the general adoption for slaughtering purposes of a suitable, reliable, and efficient instrument if it is proved to be superior to the pole-axe and does not deteriorate the meat, which must necessarily be presented to the consumer in the primest possible condition.

R. E. W. STEPHENSON, President.
WM. PAYNE, Secretary.
National Federation of Meat Traders' Associations,
4, and 5, West Smithfield, E.C.

THE MEAT TRADE AND ITS DEFENCE.

A CRITICISM BY MR. ARTHUR LEE, M.P.

To the Editor of the "Daily Mail." *January 13th, 1913.*

Sir,—I have studied with interest the official reply of the National Federation of Meat Traders to Mr. Galsworthy's indictment of existing methods of slaughter. It would, I think, have carried more weight if it had been of a less polemical character and if the meat traders could have stated their arguments without contemptuously dismissing Mr. Galsworthy and all who differ from them as ignorant and imaginative persons. After all, Mr. Galsworthy's case is largely based upon the official enquiry instituted by the Government in 1904. That inquiry was conducted by experts, scientists, and practical men, and its report can hardly be brushed aside as unworthy of serious attention. It made the following chief recommendations :— (a) All animals, without exception, should be stunned or otherwise rendered unconscious before blood is drawn ; (b) There should be an effective system of official inspection and supervision of all slaughter-houses, and none but licensed men should be employed therein.

There is nothing whatever that is impracticable or sentimental about these recommendations and they are enforced by law in many foreign countries. But they have been, and are, opposed by the meat trade because they would entail a slight modification of existing and historic methods of slaughter and some interference with the liberty of the butcher to do whatever he pleases. It may be observed, in passing, that while the law permits anyone, however inexperienced, to butcher any animal by any method—humane or otherwise—so long as its intended for human food,

the scientist is required to secure a special license and is subjected to rigorous and official supervision before he may kill any animal, however painlessly, if his object is merely to discover some cure for human suffering.

The prejudice of the butchers against public control may be quite natural and British, but it cannot be allowed to override the interests of humanity, and it is foolish to accuse those who wish for reform of slandering "an honourable and indispensable industry." Nor is it any answer to point out that cruelty exists and is tolerated in the pursuit of sport and fashion. Indeed, this is tantamount to admitting that unnecessary cruelty does take place under existing methods of slaughter but that butchers are not the only offenders. Possibly not, and I am quite sure they are, in intention, as humane as other men. But slaughter-house reformers hold and have abundantly proved that the traditional methods and conditions of slaughter are uncertain, unscientific, and productive of unnecessary suffering.

What reply do the butchers make to this? Their case appears to be, (a) that existing methods of slaughter are quite satisfactory in the hands of experienced men, (b) that only experienced men are employed, (c) that the humane killers hitherto designed are "many and various" and none of them perfect," and (d) that the stunning of animals previous to slaughter is both impracticable and inhumane. I will deal with these points seriatim.

It is not denied that the pole-axe, if used by an expert, is an effective and humane weapon, but in the hands of an inexperienced man it can be, and often is, both cruel and ineffective. I myself have often seen several blows struck before the vital spot (which is very small) has been hit. With an implement such as the "Ransom Killer" this would be impossible, even in the hands of a novice.

It is idle to contend that all slaughter-men are experts, and in reply to the meat traders' assertion that it is absolutely impossible that an inexperienced lad could be allowed to use the pole-axe I must remind them that the official representative of the master butchers in giving evidence before the Admiralty Committee, stated with some pride, "I killed my first bullock before I was twelve years old." Then the fact that there are "many and varied types" of humane killers surely does not condemn them. There are various types of golf clubs and of corkscrews—even of pole-axes—yet all may be effective. Indeed, the meat traders' reply admits that the "Ransom Killer" is very "favourably reported upon" by the trade, and the fact that an increasing number of butchers are using and prefer to use humane killers is sufficient proof that these implements are not unpractical.

Lastly, if the stunning of sheep is impracticable and inhumane, why is it enforced by law in Denmark, Switzerland and other countries; why is it admittedly practical, humane, and customary to stun calves and pigs, even in this country; and why does the meat traders' reply ridicule "the suggestion that the stunning of an animal is a difficult and complicated operation"?

The meat traders conclude by expressing their willingness to "recommend the general adoption" of humane killers as soon as a "perfect" one is invented, and we welcome this sign of grace. But over eight years have elapsed since the Admiralty Committee reported, and nothing has been done in the direction of alleviating unnecessary suffering by the meat traders' and allied associations. Meanwhile over 30,000 animals are being slaughtered in the United Kingdom every day, and the problem is too extensive and serious to be left until it is solved by the voluntary and leisurely cogitation of an ultra-conservative and interested trade.

ARTHUR LEE.

House of Commons.

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